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**Morris**

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(54) **TABLE LEG WITH HEIGHT-ADJUSTING SPACER**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **108/144.11**; 108/147.19; 248/188.4
(58) **Field of Search** ..... 108/144.11, 147.19, 108/64; 248/188.4, 188.8

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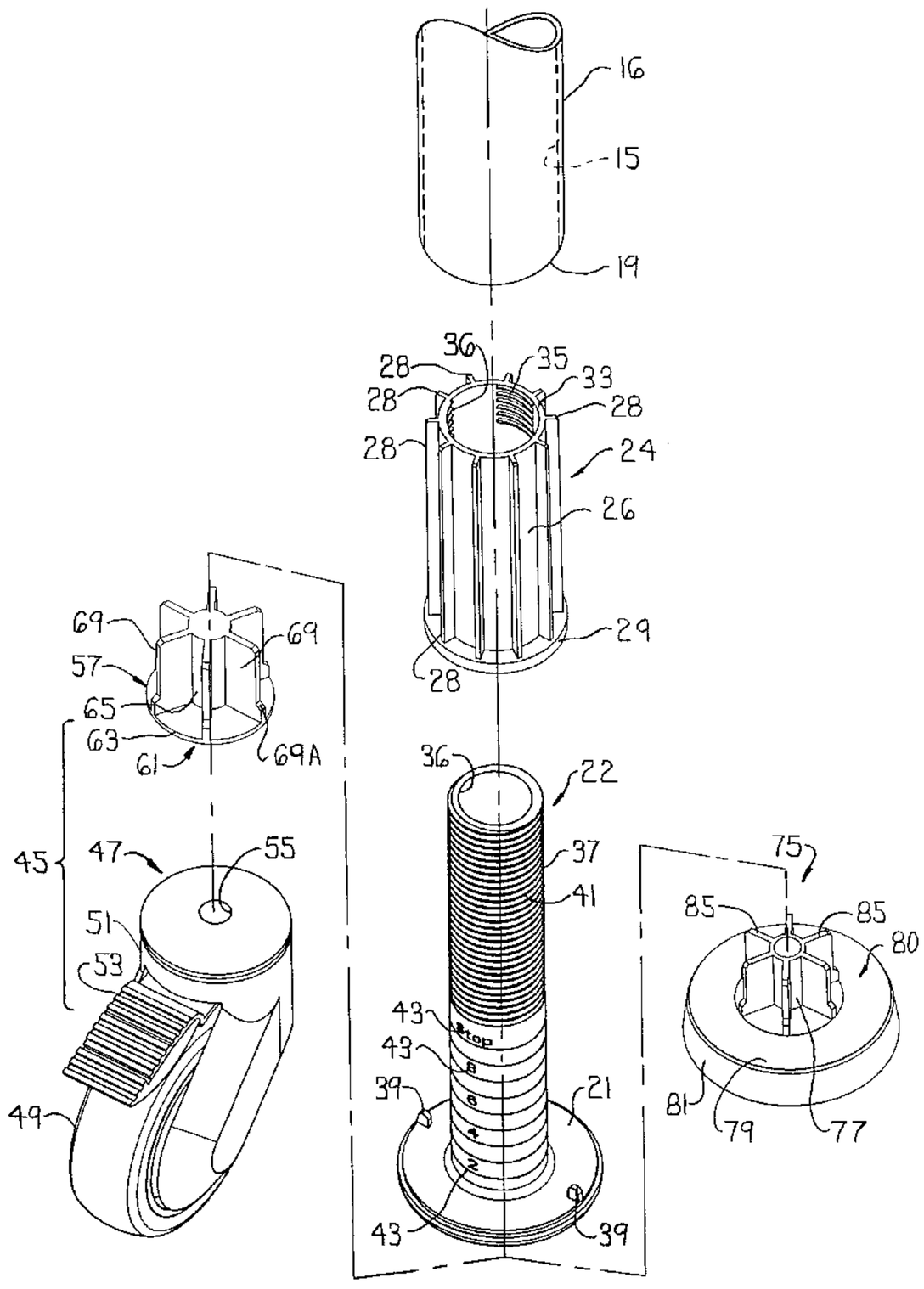
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A table leg supporting a table top vertically above the floor is adjustable between minimum and maximum heights and adapted to receive a castor at the lower end thereof. The castor alters the minimum height of the table leg to be greater than the maximum height of the table leg without the castor. A spacer is removably mounted on the lower end of the table leg without a castor for increasing its height to be at least equal to and preferably greater than the minimum height of the table leg with a castor. Thus, tables supported by legs with castors can be positioned adjacent tables supported by legs without castors, and the adjacent tables can be adjusted to the same height by adding spacers to the non-castored legs.

**12 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets**



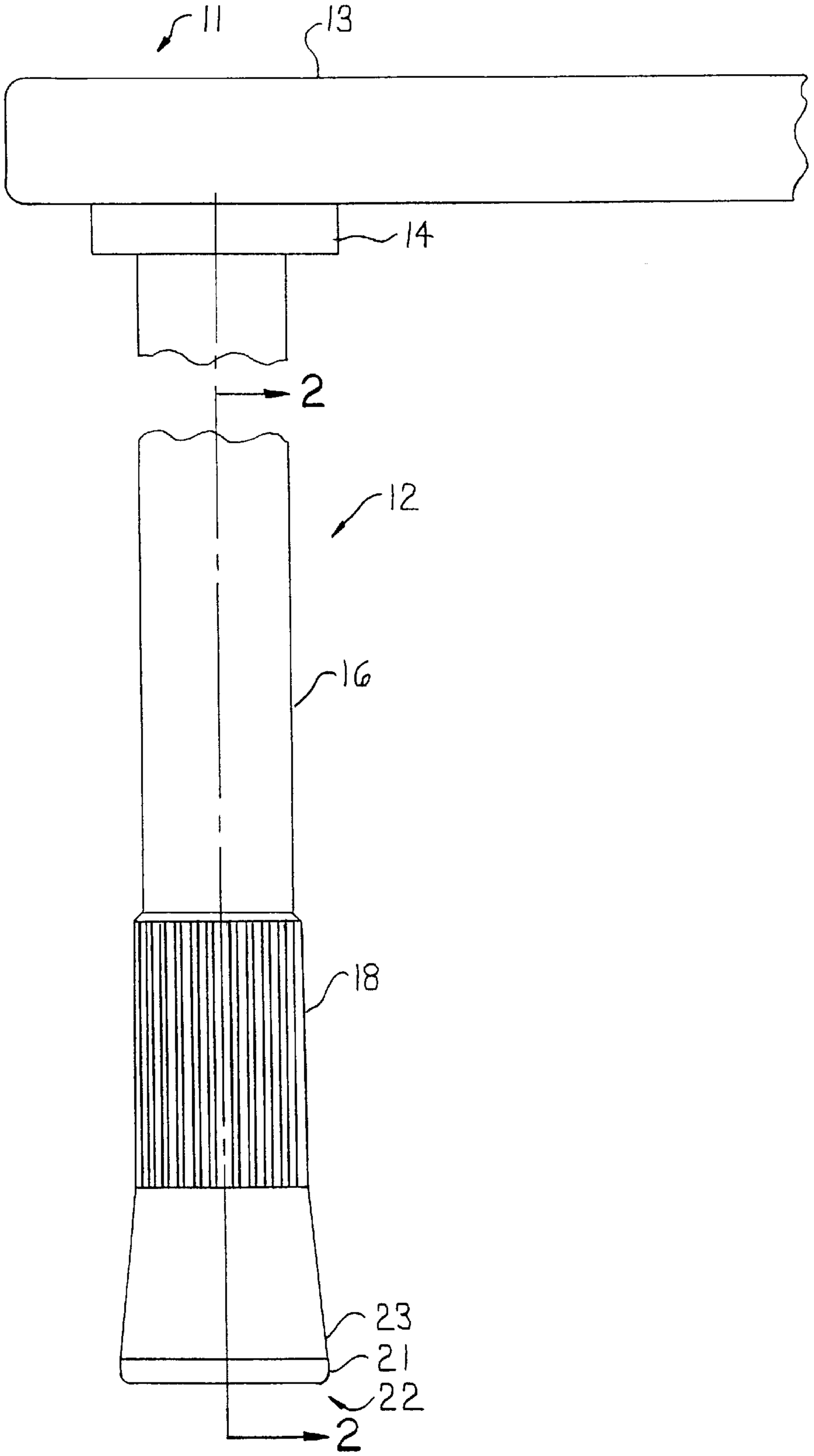



FIG. 1

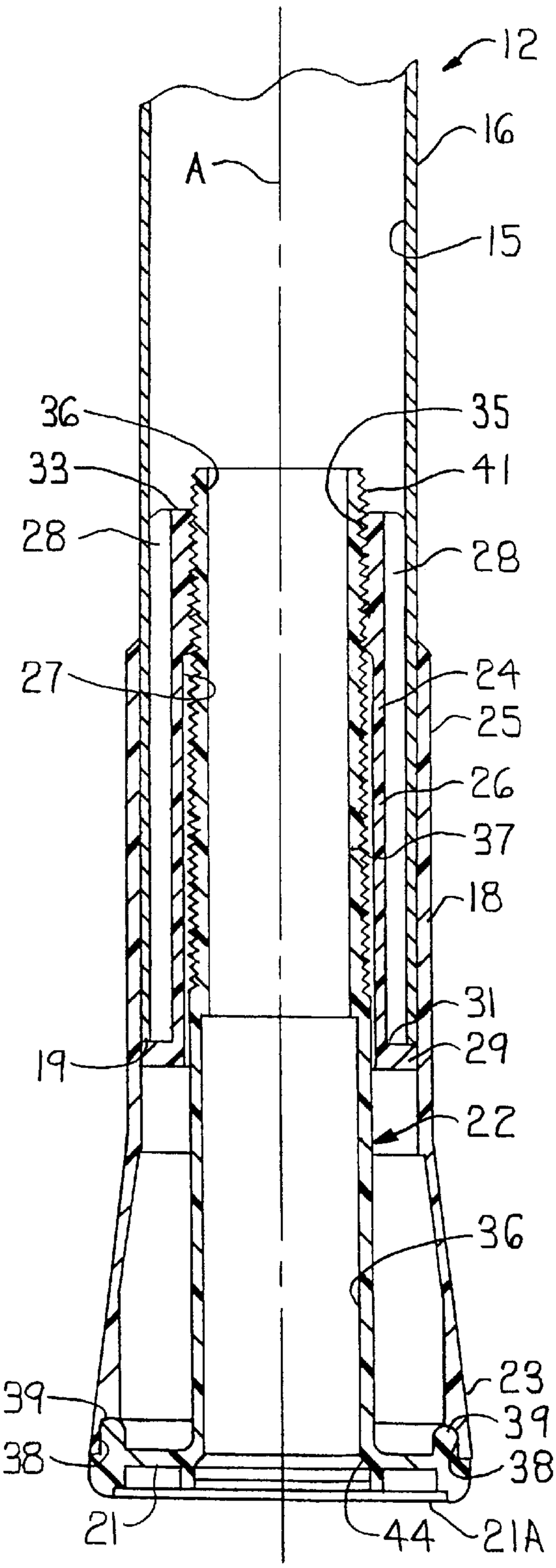

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FIG. 2

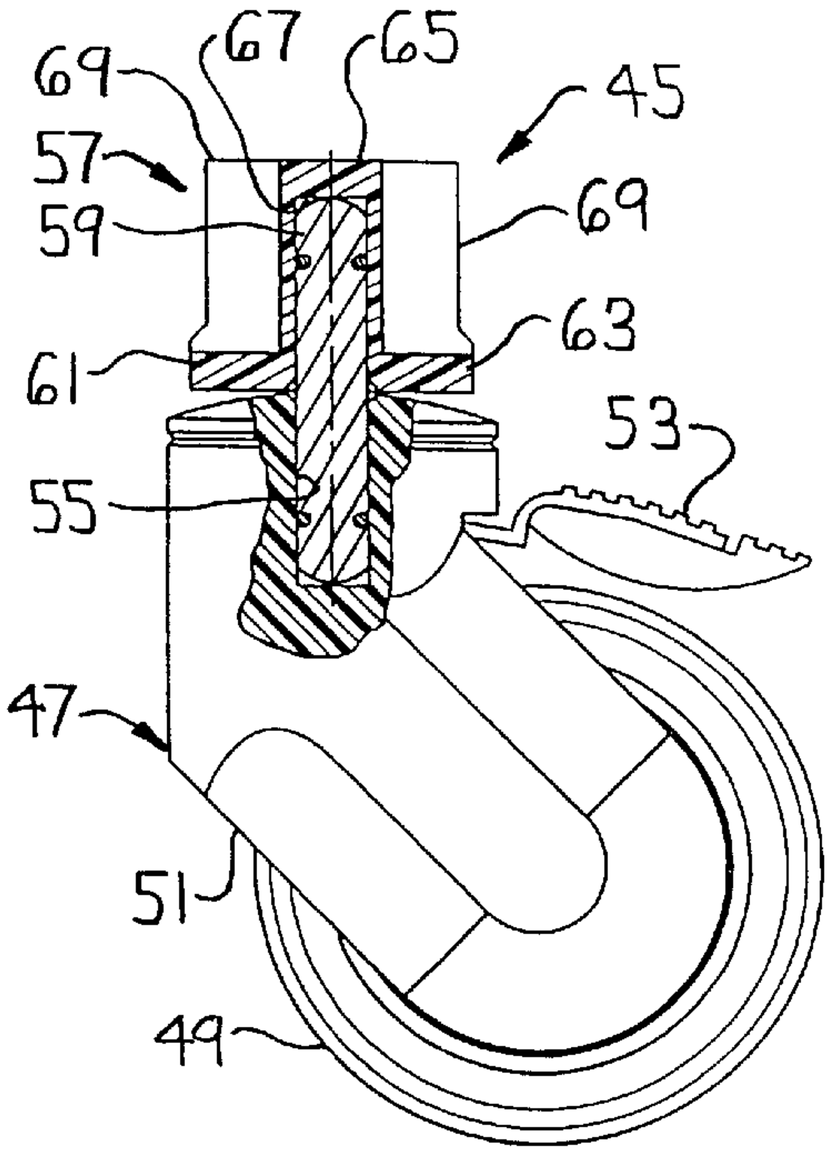
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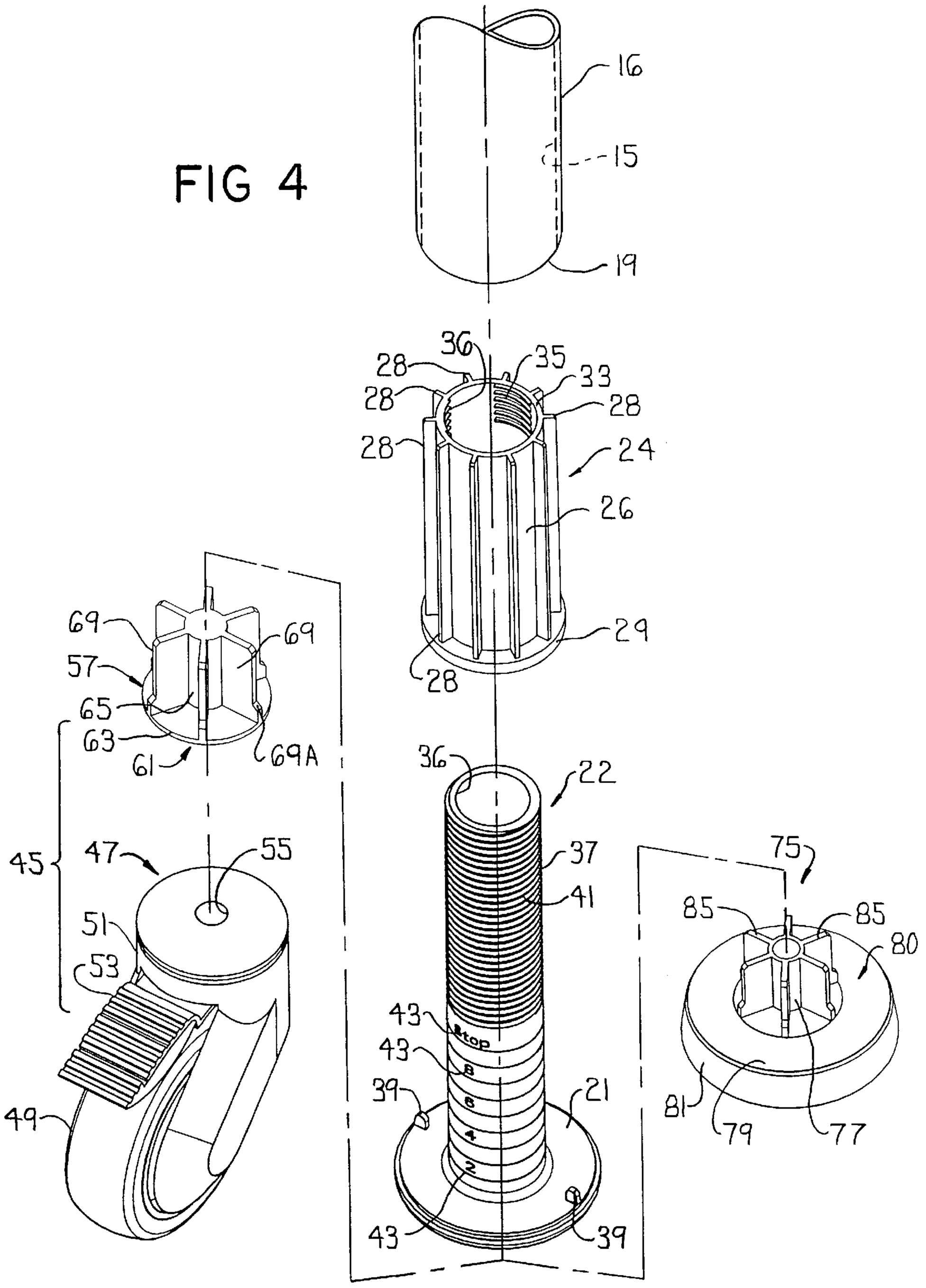
FIG. 3

FIG 4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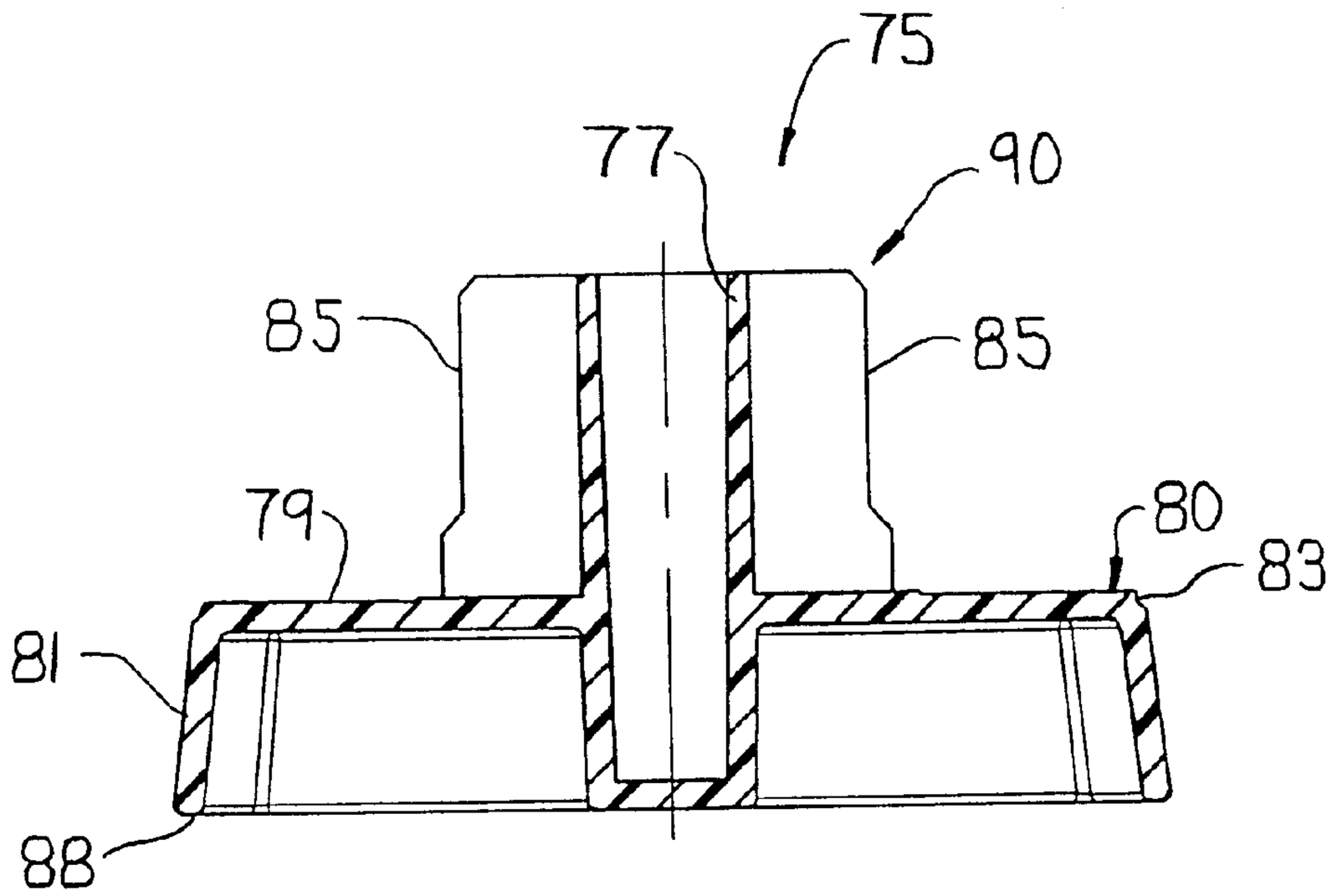


FIG. 5

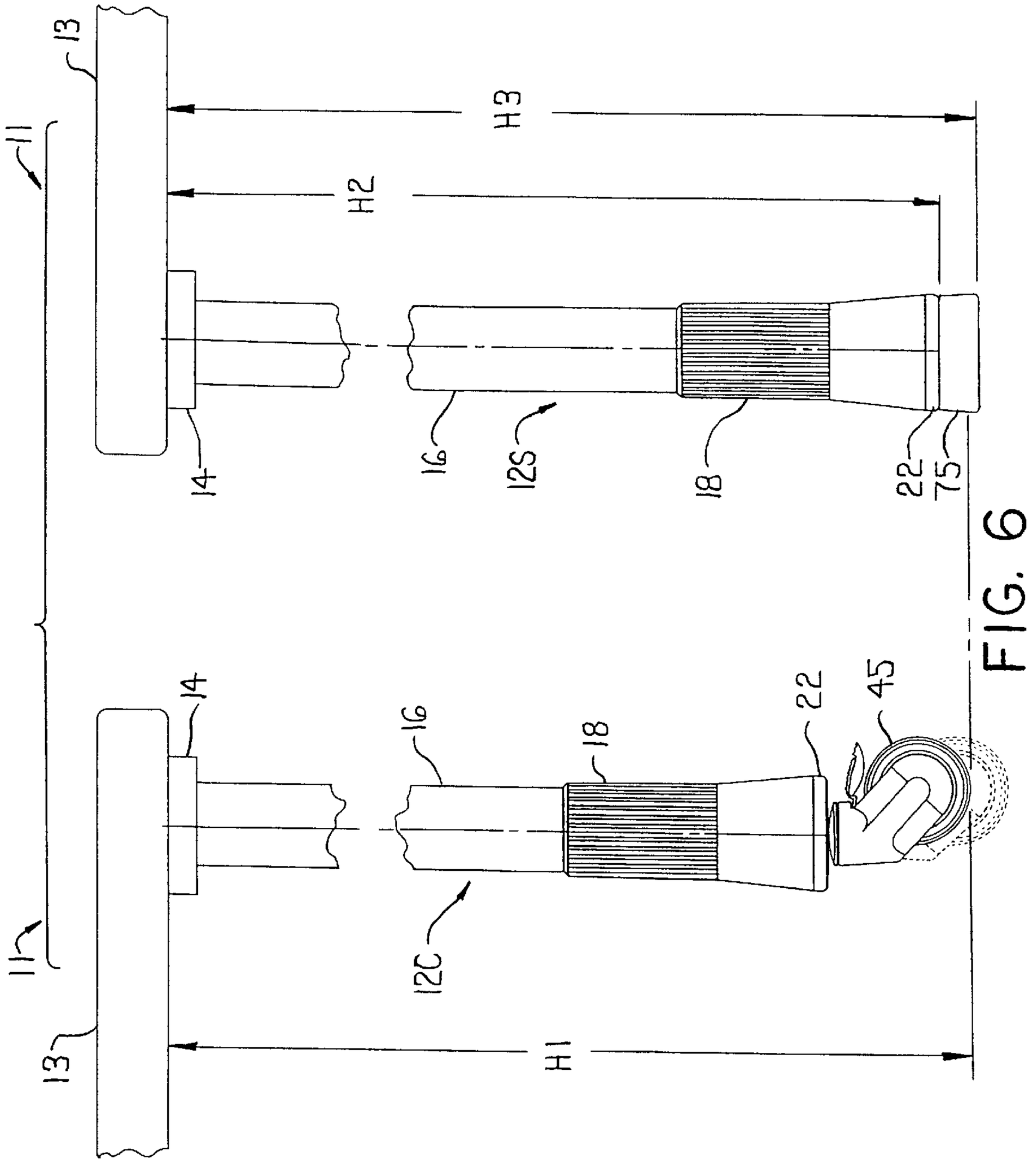


FIG. 6

# TABLE LEG WITH HEIGHT-ADJUSTING SPACER

## FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a table leg for supporting a table top above a floor, and more particularly to a table leg with a height-adjusting spacer.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

To improve the ergonomics of tables, some include table legs that have adjustment mechanisms so that the length of the leg, and hence height of the table above the floor, can be adjusted. Such height adjustment mechanisms typically include a foot threadedly received on the table leg so that the foot can be rotated to determine the length of the leg. The length adjustment capability, however, is typically of a small extent.

Some table legs also mount a castor at the floor-engaging end thereof so that the mobility of the table is improved. The addition of castors to table legs increases the length of the table leg and hence the height of the table above the floor. In an effort to improve the ergonomics of the table legs with castors, it is conventional to mount the castor on the above-described foot so that the length of the castored table leg can be adjusted. However, the addition of a castor significantly increases the length of the table leg to such an extent that the minimum length adjustment of a castored table leg is greater than the maximum length of a castor-free table leg. Thus, two of the same type of tables, one supported by castored table legs and the other supported by castor-free table legs, can not be used adjacent each other to create a single height worksurface because of these differing leg lengths prevent the table worksurfaces from being disposed in an aligned and planar relationship.

It is desirable in today's modular office environments to allow different arrangements of tables so that use of the tables and the worksurfaces that they provide is maximized. It follows that the user desires the ability to move tables supported by castored legs into position adjacent tables supported by castor-free legs, and thus use the adjacent tables as a contiguous planar worksurface without a protruding ledge at the joint between the adjacent tables.

Some tables are also supported by noncastored legs at one end and castored legs at the other end. Unfortunately, these tables often require the use of different legs so as to accommodate the castors at one end.

It is also desirable in today's office environment to be able to modify (i.e. retrofit) a table leg to provide it either with or without a castor, while at the same time permitting use of the table at the same height. Such is not possible with some conventional tables.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a structure for compensating for the differing minimum height (axial length) of a table leg with a castor (i.e. castored leg) and the maximum height of a table leg without a castor (i.e. castor-free leg) so that castor-free legs and castored legs can have the same length.

More specifically, it is an object of the present invention to provide a removable spacer on a castor-free table leg so that the maximum leg length is at least as long as the minimum length of a castored table leg. The maximum length of the table leg with spacer of the present invention is preferably at least somewhat greater than the minimum length of a castored table leg.

Other objects and purposes of the present invention will be apparent to persons familiar with structures of this general type upon reading the following specification and inspecting the accompanying drawings.



## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a fragmentary, elevational side view of a table top and table leg.

FIG. **2** is an enlarged cross sectional view taken generally along line **2**—**2** in FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** is a partial cut away view of a castor assembly.

FIG. **4** is an exploded view of a table leg showing two alternative attachments.

FIG. **5** is a cross sectional view of the spacer of the present invention.

FIG. **6** is a view showing two legs, one with a castor assembly and the other with a spacer.

Certain terminology will be used in the following description for convenience in reference only, and will not be limiting. For example, the words "upwardly", "downwardly", "rightwardly" and "leftwardly" will refer to directions in the drawings to which reference is made. Said terms will also refer to the conventional orientation of the leg structure during use thereof. The words "inwardly" and "outwardly" will refer to directions toward and away from, respectively, the geometric center of the table leg and designated parts thereof. Said terminology will include the words specifically mentioned, derivatives thereof, and words of similar import.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to the drawings, FIGS. **1** and **2** illustrate a table **11** supported vertically from a floor (not designated) by a leg structure **12** which is joined to the underside of the table top **13** by a conventional connector **14**. The leg structure **12** includes an elongate main leg **16** depending downwardly from and at its upper end connecting to the connector **14**, a decorative outboard sleeve **18** slidingly partially telescoping over a lower end **19** of the leg **16**, a mounting bushing **24** fixed in the lower leg end **19**, and an adjustable glide **22** movably mounted in the bushing **24** and projecting downwardly from the lower leg end **19**. The adjustable glide **22** conventionally rests on the floor.

The elongate main leg **16** is a hollow cylindrical tube defining a longitudinal through passage **15**. The leg **16** is normally oriented so that the longitudinal axis A thereof projects substantially vertically. The lower portion of the passage **15** receives the bushing **24**, whereas the upper end is closed by the table top **13** or the connector **14**.

The bushing **24** (FIGS. **2** and **4**) is received in the lower portion of the leg passage **15** and fixed to the lower end **19** of the leg **16**. The bushing **24** comprises an elongate, rigid right cylindrical tube **26** enclosing a coaxial through passage **27**. A plurality of angularly spaced, axially extending ribs **28** project radially outwardly from the tube **26**. The tube **26** at its lower end terminates in an annular outboard flange **29**. The flange **29** has a outer diameter generally equal to the outer diameter of the main leg **16** and abuts the lower free leg end **19**. The plurality of outboard, radially extending ribs **28** are positioned on the tube **26** extending axially from the annular flange **29** to an upper end **33** of the tube **26** and define an outer diameter generally equal to the diameter of the passage **15** so as to effect a snug fit of the bushing **24** within the leg **16**.

As shown in FIGS. **2** and **4**, internal threads **35** are positioned in the passage **27** of tube **26** solely adjacent the upper end **33** thereof. The threads **35** in the illustrated

arrangement extend partially longitudinally, e.g. less than one-third of the length of the tube **26**, and the remainder of the passage **27** is substantially smooth-walled and of greater diameter than the thread diameter.

The bushing **24** is preferably constructed of a relatively hard and strong plastics material.

The adjustable glide **22** includes an elongate, rigid generally right cylinder **37** enclosing a through passage **36**, and a radially outwardly projecting annular flange **21** at the lower end of the cylinder **37**. The flange **21**, which functions as a floor-engaging foot, includes at least two upward nubs **39** which cooperate with the decorative sleeve **18** as explained hereinafter. The nubs **39** can be replaced with an annular rib (not shown) on the upper surface of the flange **21** if desired. The nubs **39** are disposed closely adjacent but slightly radially inwardly of the exterior peripheral surface **40** of the flange **21**. The flange **21** also defines thereon a lower or bottom surface **21**A which can directly contact the floor.

The cylinder **37** has external threads **41** beginning at the upper end thereof and extending over about one-half the length thereof. The axial length of the threaded section **41** is, in the preferred arrangement, of a length similar to the length of the bushing **24**. From the lower end of the threads **41** to the flange **21**, the cylinder **37** is non-threaded but includes indicia **43** which indicate the extent that the adjustable glide **22** projects downwardly beyond the lower end **19** of the main leg **16**. As shown in FIG. **4**, the indicia **43** include visible circumferential markers and length indicators which are embossed or otherwise applied on the outer surface of the cylinder so that they are visible to a person adjusting the length of the leg structure **12**. The indica **43** may be surrounding lines which in effect define a plurality of axially adjacent annular bands containing visual indicators such as numbers.

The lower end of the glide **22** defines therein a component-receiving opening or recess **44** which opens coaxially upwardly from the bottom of the foot **21** for communication with the passage **35**. This recess is generally cylindrical, but is stepped radially inwardly where it joins to the passage **35**.

Considering now the cover or sleeve **18**, it includes an upper tube part **25** integral with an outwardly flared, downwardly depending annular skirt part **23**. The tube **25** has an inner diameter slightly greater than the outer diameter of the leg **16** so that the sleeve **18** is slidably but snugly received over the leg. The skirt **23** at its lower free end includes an internal annular recess **38** in which the nubs **39** are received so as to axially secure the skirt to the glide **22** with the skirt resting on top of the flange **21** in its lowered position. The skirt **23** has a maximum diameter substantially equal to the diameter of the flange **21**. Thus, in a lowered position of the sleeve **18**, it substantially encloses the glide **22** irrespective of the adjusted position thereof.

In the assembly of the leg structure **12**, the bushing **24** is received in the lower end of the through passage **15** of the main leg **16** until the flange **29** abuts the lower face of the leg **16** so as to limit axial insertion of the bushing. The ribs **28** of the bushing **24** press against the surface of the passage **15** to fix the bushing **24** within the leg **16**. The decorative sleeve **18** is telescoped over the exterior of the leg **16** and flange **29**. Thereafter, the cylinder **37** of the adjustable glide **22** is axially inserted into the through passage **27** of the bushing **24** until its external threads **41** contact the internal threads **35** of the bushing **24**. The adjustable glide **22** is rotated so that the threads **35**, **41** intermesh and thereby adjustably fix the glide in the bushing **24**. The main leg **26**, bushing **24**, and adjustable glide **22** thus nest within each other in the assembled state of the leg structure **12**.

The assembled leg structure **12** has a maximum length H2 (FIG. **6**) when the adjustable glide **22** is threaded axially downwardly (away from table **11**) to its maximum extent wherein all of the threads **35** of the bushing **24** fully intermesh with threads **41** of the glide **22**. The threads **35** of the bushing **24** are always fully intermeshed in the threads **41** of the cylinder **37** for safety considerations. This maximum height H2 corresponds to a position with the "stop" indicia **43** visible as shown in FIG. **4**. During adjustment of the height of the leg structure **12**, the decorative sleeve **18** can be slid axially upwardly of the main leg **16** so that the indicia **43** are visible to the person adjusting the leg height. After the desired height is reached, the decorative sleeve **18** is slid downwardly onto the flange **21** of the glide **22** and covers the indicia **43** and the portion of the glide cylinder **37** extending downwardly below the lower end of the leg **16**.

In one construction of the leg structure **12**, a castor assembly **45** (FIGS. **3** and **4**) is mounted to the lower end of the adjustable glide **22**. The castor assembly **45** includes a conventional castor **47** having a wheel **49** mounted to a yoke **51** by an axle (not shown), and a brake **53** is mounted to the yoke **51** for selectively engaging the wheel **49** to prevent rotation thereof. The yoke **51** includes a vertical, upwardly open recess **55** which receives a castor mounting adapter **57** therein. The adapter **57** comprises a pin **59** (FIG. **3**) partially received in the recess **55**, and a coupling **61** receiving the upper portion of the pin **59**. The coupling **61** includes an annular bottom flange **63**, a coaxial cylindrical extension **65** upstanding from the flange **63**, and a coaxial blind bore **67** for receiving the pin **59** and opening downwardly through the flange **63** and extension **65**. Angularly spaced ribs **69** extend axially upwardly from flange **63** throughout the length of the cylindrical extension **65** and project radially outwardly thereof. The flange **63** and adjacent lower portions of ribs **69** define a diameter which substantially equals the inner diameter of the recess **44** in the glide **22** so as to effect a snug fit when the coupling **61** is inserted into the recess **44**. The ribs **69**, above the stop or shoulder **69**A, are of smaller diameter so as to snugly fit within the passage **35**.

A modified assembly of the leg structure **12** includes addition of the castor assembly **45** to create a castored leg **12**C (FIG. **6**). The coupling **61** is inserted into the recess **44** of the adjustable glide **22**. The ribs **69** snugly contact the recess **44** and passage **35** to fix the coupling **61** therein. The pin **59** as carried by the yoke of the castor **47** is then inserted into the bore **67** so that the upper surface of yoke **51** substantially abuts the flange **61** as shown in FIG. **3**, thereby enabling the castor to abut the pin **59**. When assembled, the minimum height (axial length) of the leg structure **12**C is increased by the height of the castor **45** extending beneath the glide **22**, resulting in an overall minimum height H1 of the castored leg.

The above described assemblies of the leg structures **12**, **12**C are known. One example of this type of table leg is sold by Plako, GmbH. of Ennepetal, Germany. Unfortunately, these known leg arrangements create a problem with regard to their respective heights which prevent the use of castor-free leg structures **12** and castored leg structures **12**C on the same table, or on adjacent tables of the same height. More specifically, the maximum height H2 of a castor-free table leg structure **12** is less than the overall minimum height H1 of a castored table leg structure **12**C (FIG. **6**). Therefore, adjacent tables which are respectively supported by castor-free leg structures **12** and castored leg structures **12**C can not

be adjusted to define a contiguous planar worksurface. Castor-free and castored leg structures **12** and **12**C also can not be mounted to a single table top because such an arrangement would permanently slope the table top.

To solve the problems created by the conventional table legs, the leg structure **12** of the present invention further includes a separate spacer **75** (FIGS. **4** and **5**) which can be easily but removably attached to the bottom of glide **22** so as to extend the length (i.e. height) of the leg arrangement **12** when a castor assembly is not mounted thereon.

The spacer **75** includes an elongate cylindrical hub **77** which, adjacent its lower end, is rigidly joined to a surrounding annular foot part **80**. This foot part **80**, in the illustrated embodiment, includes a top wall **79** which projects radially outwardly from hub **77** and, at its outer annular edge **83**, is fixed to a downwardly projecting annular skirt **81**. The skirt **81** is of significant axial length (i.e. height), having a minimum height of about one-half inch and preferably a height of about three-fourth inch to about one inch. The skirt **81** has a diameter which approximately equals, or is of similar magnitude to the diameter of the glide foot **21**. The lower free edge **88** of skirt **81** defines a floor engaging surface. The hub **77** also preferably projects downwardly so that its lower end surface is substantially coplanar with edge **88**. A plurality of ribs **85** preferably extend radially between the hub **77** and skirt **81** to reinforce the foot part **80**.

The upper part **90** of spacer **75** disposed above the foot part **80** defines a coupling part which generally corresponds to the coupling **61** described above. That is, the coupling part of spacer **75** is cantilevered coaxially upward from foot part **80** and includes a plurality of angularly spaced ribs **85** which extend axially along the upper portion of hub **77** and project radially outwardly thereof. The ribs **85** have a stepped configuration like ribs **69** so as to snugly fit within the stepped recess **44** and into the lower end of passage **36**.

The spacer **75** is preferably molded in one piece of a plastics material, and the hub **77** has a blind bore formed coaxially thereof and opening outwardly through the upper end thereof.

To assemble the modified leg structure **12**, the spacer **75** is mounted to the lower end of the adjustable glide **22** to create a castor-free leg **12**S with spacer (FIGS. **4** and **6**). The coupling part **90** of the spacer **75** is inserted into the recess **44** of the adjustable glide **22** so that the ribs **85** snugly fit against the interior of the glide **22** thereby fixing the spacer **75** into the glide. The top wall **79** of spacer foot part **80** abuts the lower face **21**A of the foot part **21** in the fully inserted position of the spacer **75**, whereat the skirt **81** defines the height added to the leg structure **12** (FIG. **1**). That is, the leg structure **12**S with spacer **75** (FIG. **6**) has a height H**3** which is greater than the height H**2** of the leg structure **12** without the spacer. Moreover, the leg structure **12**S with spacer **75** has a maximum height H**3** which at least equals and preferably is greater than the minimum height H**1** of the castored leg structure **12**C.

In use, a table supported by the castor-free leg structures **12** (FIG. **1**) can be adjusted between minimum and maximum heights so as to improve the ergonomics thereof. If it is desired to use two tables next to each other in order to enlarge the available worksurface, then another similar table supported by castor-free leg structures **12** is positioned adjacent the first table and the heights of the adjacent tables are adjusted to provide a substantially contiguous planar worksurface.

However, it may be preferable to provide one of the tables with castored leg structures **12**C. Unfortunately, the maximum height H**2** of the castor-free leg structures **12** is less than the minimum height H**1** of the castored leg structures **12**C. It follows that the tables can not be horizontally aligned and the worksurfaces of these adjacent tables is disjointed and nonplanar. This problem is overcome by adding the spacer **75** to the leg structures **12** (i.e. without a castor) to create the leg structure **12**S (FIG. **6**) having a maximum height H**3** which is greater than the minimum height H**1** of the castored leg structure **12**C. As a result, tables respectively supported by castored leg structures **12**C and castor-free leg structures **12**S with spacers can horizontally align the worksurfaces to define a contiguous planar worksurface.

Further, a table with castored legs **12**C can have the casters removed and spacers **75** retrofitted onto the legs so as to maintain the table at the same or similar height. The spacers **75** can also be easily retrofitted on, or removed from, the legs **12** to provide a greater variation in selectable table heights when desired.

Although a particular preferred embodiment of the invention has been disclosed in detail for illustrative purposes, it will be recognized that variations or modifications of the disclosed apparatus, including the rearrangement of parts, lie within the scope of the present invention.

The invention claimed is:

**1**. In combination, first and second tables positioned adjacent each other and defining substantially horizontal worksurfaces and respectively vertically supported by pluralities of first and second leg assemblies above a floor, said first and second leg assemblies each including a vertically elongate leg member and a height adjustable glide movably mounted at a lower end of said leg member and projecting downwardly therefrom for contact with a floor, said glide being adjustable between first and second positions defining first minimum and maximum heights of said leg assemblies, castors being respectively mounted to said glides on said first leg assemblies so as to define a second minimum height of said first leg assemblies, said second minimum height being greater than said first maximum height, and spacers respectively removably mounted to lower free ends of said second leg assemblies to define a second maximum height of said second leg assemblies, each said spacer including an elongate axial cylinder, a disk-shaped flange extending outwardly of said cylinder, and a skirt cantilevered from an outer periphery of said flange, a free edge of said skirt and a lower end of said cylinder being adapted to contact the floor, said skirt defining the height of said spacer which is added to said second leg assemblies so as to determine said second maximum height, said second maximum height being greater than or equal to said second minimum height, and said first and second leg assemblies being adjusted to a same height which at least equals said second minimum height so as to horizontally align the worksurfaces defined by said first and second tables.

**2**. The combination according to claim **1**, wherein said leg members each include a main elongate leg portion having a recess at the lower end thereof, a bushing fixed in said recess and having a through passage in which said adjustable glide is received, said bushing and said glide including intermeshed threads so that said glide can be rotated relative to said bushing to determine the height of said leg assembly, said glide including a downwardly-opening recess for respectively receiving one of said castor and said spacer.

**3**. The combination according to claim **2**, wherein said spacer includes radially outwardly extending ribs on said cylinder above said flange, said ribs snugly engaging within said recess in said glide in a said second leg assembly.

**4**. The combination according to claim **3**, wherein said castor includes an adapter for fixing said castor to said glide,

said adapter including an elongate axial cylinder and radially outwardly extending ribs for snugly engaging within said recess in said glide in a said first leg assembly, said ribs on both said adapter and said spacer being identical to each other so that said adapter and spacer can be mounted in identical recesses in respective said glides.

**5**. The combination according to claim **1** wherein said glides of said first and second leg assemblies each define a downwardly opening recess therein, said recesses being identical to one another to permit interchangeable mounting of one of said castor and said spacer therein.

**6**. In combination, first and second tables positioned adjacent each other and defining substantially horizontal worksurfaces and respectively vertically supported by pluralities of first and second leg assemblies above a floor, said first and second leg assemblies each including a vertically elongate leg member and a height adjustable glide movably mounted at a lower end of said leg member and projecting downwardly therefrom for contact with a floor, said glide being adjustable between first and second positions defining first minimum and maximum heights of said leg assemblies, castors being respectively mounted to said glides on said first leg assemblies so as to define a second minimum height of said first leg assemblies, said second minimum height being greater than said first maximum height, and spacers respectively removably mounted to lower free ends of said second leg assemblies, said spacers each including a coupling part and a foot part joined together, said coupling parts being removably mounted to the respective said glides, and said foot parts extending below the respective said glides to add height to said second leg assemblies and define a second maximum height of said second leg assemblies, said second maximum height being greater than or equal to said second minimum height, and said first and second leg assemblies being adjusted to a same height which at least equals said second minimum height so as to horizontally align the worksurfaces defined by said first and second tables.

**7**. The combination of claim **6** wherein each said spacer includes a generally cylindrical hub rigidly joined to the respective foot part, an upper portion of said hub including a plurality of ribs which extend axially along said hub and project radially outwardly therefrom, said ribs and upper portion together defining said coupling part which engages in a downwardly opening recess defined in said glide of the respective second leg assembly, said foot part including a top wall which projects radially outwardly from a lower portion of said hub and has an outer annular edge, and an annular skirt which projects downwardly from said outer edge and has a lower free edge which engages the floor.

**8**. The combination of claim **7** wherein each said castor includes a wheel assembly and an adaptor mounted on an upper portion thereof, said adaptor including a generally cylindrical hub and a plurality of ribs which extend axially along said adaptor hub and project radially outwardly therefrom, said adaptor hub and the respective ribs engaging within a downwardly opening recess defined in said glide of the respective first leg assembly.

**9**. The table according to claim **8** wherein said recesses defined in said glides of said first and second leg assemblies are identical to one another, and said coupling parts and said adaptors have similar configurations to allow interchangeable mounting of one of said castor and said spacer on a selected leg assembly.

**10**. A table leg for supporting a table top, said table leg comprising:

an elongate main leg connectable to an underside of a table top for supporting same vertically above a floor;

an elongate bushing received in and fixed to said main leg adjacent a lower end of said main leg, said bushing including an axial through passage and an outwardly extending flange at a lower end thereof, said flange contacting the lower end of said main leg, said passage being internally threaded adjacent an upper end thereof;

an elongate adjustable glide received in said passage, said glide including external threads on an upper portion thereof and a radially outwardly extending flange at a lower end thereof, said glide further including a downwardly opening recess in the lower end thereof, said external and internal threads being intermeshed to axially fix said glide to said bushing and to permit rotation of said glide so as to determine maximum and minimum heights of said leg; and

a spacer having a main body of significant height and a reduced diameter coaxial stem, said stem being removably fixed in said recess of said glide, said main body extending downwardly from said glide to increase the maximum height of said leg by the height of said main body;

whereby said table leg is adapted to receive either a said castor or a said spacer so that a pair of table tops respectively supported by said table leg with said castor and said table leg with said spacer are adjustable to the same height above a floor.

**11**. The table leg according to claim **10**, wherein said main body includes a disk-shaped flange extending radially outwardly of said stem and a skirt cantilevered downwardly from an outer periphery of said disk-shaped flange, a free end of said skirt being adapted to contact the floor and support said leg.

**12**. The table leg according to claim **11**, wherein said stem extends below said disk-shaped flange and a lower end of said stem is adapted to contact the floor and support said leg, and said stem lower end and skirt free end are substantially coplanar with one another.

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